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When A 2-Party System Becomes A 1-Party Rubber Stamp

When a country is denied a choice on the most burning issue of the time, the war in Vietnam, then the two-party system has become a one-party rubber stamp. This is the first and essential point to be made in the wake of the Democratic and Republican conventions. The Establishment and the military have locked the ballot boxes. If the results are an intensified alienation among the youth who must fight this war, an increase in resistance to the draft, a rise in street demonstrations and violence, this is the cause and not some occult conspiracy. The real conspiracy was the one which wove together Eisenhower's last inflammatory message to the Republican convention with the iron control Johnson and Daley exercised over the Democrats. Both parties, both candidates, have been drafted. The Pentagon has won the election even before the votes are cast.

The Ragged Army Which Exposed The Truth

The second thing which needs to be said is that the country owes a debt of gratitude to the tatterdemalion army of yippies, hippies and peaceniks—and to their leaders David Dellinger, Tom Hayden and Jerry Rubin—who frightened the Establishment into such elaborate security precautions in Chicago. They made opposition to the war visible. The special barbed wire fences around the Amphitheatre which turned "Stalag '68" into the favorite joke of the Convention, the system of electronically checked passes so intricate that it led to a whole series of angry clashes with the delegates themselves, the vast concentration of police, National Guardsmen and troops, as if in preparation for a revolution, dramatized for the whole world to see that there was something indelibly undemocratic about this Democratic convention.

Of course security precautions were justified. The Secret Service, the FBI and the Chicago police had a right to be fearful of what might happen, especially if Johnson himself had turned up and this was the grim eventuality I believe they had in mind. But the question not to be lost sight of is *why* for the first time in American history a convention and a President required so much protection.

This was the scandal it proved impossible to hide and this is why the police were so brutal in dealing with the camera men and the reporters. They *were* the main enemy of the proceedings, the eyes and ears of the country, the unwelcome witnesses of the rigging within the Convention and the repression without. Johnson and Daley, alike in so many ways, are alike in their obsessive animosity to the press. Daley's big and beefy police seemed to crack the skulls of the TV and press reporters with a special gusto and as if given free rein by their masters. Their conduct was in its own way a resounding tribute to the First Amendment. It also gave middle class whites a taste of the police brutality which is an old story to blacks.

From Chicago's Pro-Police Hearst Paper

"Scores of people under the Palmer House canopy watched in horror as a policeman went animal when a crippled man couldn't get away fast enough. The man hopped with his stick as fast as he could, but the policeman shoved him in the back, then hit him with the nightstick, hit him again, and finally crashed him into a lamppost. Clergymen, medics, and this cripple were the special pigeons last night. At State and Adams a nightstick cracked open the head of a clergyman who didn't move fast enough. He was lying in a store doorway, bleeding heavily, when I left . . . It sickens me to write this because I am on the police's side, and I went out at 1 o'clock yesterday to write exactly what I saw and I was sure it would bring credit to the police. . . . [Then after describing the arrest of Jerry Rubin, a radical leader, on a quiet street walking with a girl friend] Rubin was grabbed off the street and rushed to jail because of what he thinks. This is the way it is done in Prague. This is what happens to candidates who finish second in Vietnam. This is not the beginning of the police state, it IS the police state."

—Jack Mabley in the Chicago American *Aug. 29.*

The Convention was a triumph of what the Russian Communists would call "democratic centralism", that submission of "the lower organs of the party to the higher" which they are reimposing in Prague. The delegates chosen were less representative of the party rank-and-file than of the party machines, and the committees were even less representative than the delegates. A Citizens' Committee, to include respected retired jurists, ought to be formed to take testimony from delegates, demonstrators and the police on the whole question of how this convention and the protests against it were handled. It would show I believe that security was used as a way to control the convention. If assassination plots were as thick as Daley and the police now claim—and Humphrey idiotically echoes them—then it is strange that no attempts were made, no shots fired, no bombs thrown. For in the crowded hallways of the main hotels including the Hilton, it would have been easy for an assassin to take a potshot at any one of the candidates. There security was poor.

On the other hand, at the Amphitheatre, guards were used to harass McCarthy and McGovern delegates. The opposition on the floor was hamstrung by lack of phone communications and by the arbitrary and arrogant rulings that Carl Albert as Chairman applied to any attempt to protest. The Johnson steamroller stopped the effort of the Humphrey

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forces to put a slightly milder face on the pro-war Vietnam plank. Not the slightest deviation was allowed. Johnson and Daley are masters of meticulous detail,* accustomed to rule their kingdoms with an iron hand. So it was that a convention strikingly cool despite its unrepresentative majority to any mention of Johnson's name was forced to wear his brand in the platform plank on Vietnam and the choice of Vice President. A candidate who might have placated blacks and anti-war delegates was Fred Harris of Oklahoma. But he was the vice chairman of the Kerner commission whose report Johnson disliked. Johnson and Daley preferred a safe and bridle-broken liberal like Muskie of Maine (Johnson put a saddle on him long ago), with an appeal to Chicago's Polish Americans and an "Ethnic" offset to Agnew.

How Daley Provoked Trouble

To wander in Lincoln Park among the hippies and yippies, to drop in on the headquarters of the New Left demonstrators, to talk at random with the youths in Grant Park and the streets was to feel that in revulsion against the war the best of a generation were being lost—some among the hippies to drugs, some among the radicals to an almost hysterical frenzy of alienation. There were a few among them I am sure who sought deliberately by taunts and obscenities to provoke a confrontation with the police, but far more were driven to angry resistance by Daley's unwillingness to let them sleep in Lincoln Park and to grant permits for peaceful demonstrations and parades. These would have let off steam and been far easier to police than crowds which felt their elementary rights were being trampled. Even Joseph J. Lefevour, president of the Chicago lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police, in the middle of a press conference called to defend police tactics, admitted (*Chicago Tribune,* Aug. 30), "Most of the kids in the parks," i.e. Lincoln and Grant parks, "have been orderly. They've obeyed our orders and joked with us. But then their leaders work them up to fever pitch and disappear, leaving the kids to take the consequences." But could they have been worked up "to fever pitch" without the brutal nightly sweeps at curfew time in Lincoln Park, and the indiscriminate and sadistic way the police beat and teargassed not only peaceful demonstrators in Grant park but

* **A sample: In Chicago, unlike Miami, reporters with credentials did not get assigned seats as usual at conventions. This seemed odd. We learned the reason why the night of the balloting for nominees and the final session when I and many other reporters were unable to get into the top galleries supposedly reserved for us because they were packed by Daley goons from the Sanitation Department.**

Authentic Voice of The Poor At Chicago

"The basic cure for poverty is money. We believe that the way to do something about poverty is to give people the money they need to meet the basic necessities of life at least at a minimum level for health, decency and dignity. This minimum should be given uniformly by a simple procedure to all people who are in need without degrading investigations and harrassments. We suggest that the absolute minimum standard should be the 'low income' poverty line as definied by Mollie Orshansky of the Social Security Administration. This level provides about $4400 per year for an urban family of four with a $600 a year adjustment for additional or fewer family members. It would cost the Federal government about $20 billion a year to insure every family an income at this level. This is a tiny amount when measured against our gross national product, the enormous social and economic costs of poverty, or our military commitment abroad. The more popularly known Federal 'poverty line' of $3335 for a family of four describes a level below which everyone is desperately poor."

—Dr. Geo. A. Wiley to the Democratic Platform Committee in Chicago on behalf of the National Welfare Rights Organization Aug. 22.

The One Fresh Constructive Proposal Made At The Democratic National Convention

"America has advocated land reform all over the world. It is time we implement land reform now in our own country. We must end the devastating poverty that is destroying our rural life and forcing the mass exodus to our troubled cities. We believe that we can borrow from the programs of the New Deal which gave hope to rural Americans.

"Holmes County, Mississippi was the model for federal land reform nearly 30 years ago. In 1940 the Farm Security Administration, now the Farmer's Home Administration, turned over 9,350 acres of land to poor tenant farmers. With federal 3%—40 year loans, 106 farms were created, including 36 cooperatives.

"Today, these farmers and their children comprise the most vigorous rural community in our state and black people here—because of their economic independence from the white power structure—have been the vanguard against racial oppression in Mississippi. Last year they elected Rep. Robert Clark, the first black legislator to serve in the Mississippi legislature since Reconstruction.

"There were many other such land reform projects initiated under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1935 the Resettlement Administration redistributed large plantation lands to 10,000 poor families. This land was acquired by the federal government. The government helped build community facilities on this land.

"These projects point the way the government can help reconstruct the rural South. Today we call for federal sponsorship of rural community development projects similar to those that have been initiated in a few urban areas. These projects should emphasize farm cooperatives because the day of the small farm is ended. Competition demands large-scale modern methods, machinery and technical assistance.

"Poor people will require outright grants of free land. The government should also sell acreage to low and moderate income people at a nominal fee and should offer low interest long-term loans. Land should be made available from federal and state-owned acreage and from private land now being subsidized to lie unused which may be taken under the power of eminent domain.

"The rural farming cooperatives should also contain cooperatively owned industrial enterprises as well. With cooperative farms and industrial concerns side by side the result would be a rebuilding of small town and country life and the emergence of 'new towns' with streets, housing, public utilities, hospitals, schools, and parks subsidized by the federal government."

—The only major platform plank dealing with the crisis of rural poverty in the Deep South, as presented Aug. 24 by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in Chicago.

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onlookers behind the police's own barricades in front of the Hilton?

Daley has long run a one-party state in Chicago, with just that combination of brutality, social welfare handouts and cooperation with big business which is also the essence of Johnson's own conception of personal government. The way Humphrey has stepped out as Daley's apologist, even after the climactic raid on the McCarthy headquarters in the Hilton, is an index of what we can expect from a Humphrey Administration, of what he means by law and order, and of what lies behind his platitudinous evangelism. Another index—to be forgotten at our peril—was his appearance before the Catholic War Veterans on the eve of the Convention when he threw away a moderate prepared script and delivered a warmongering address. These two events have finally decided for me that Humphrey is no lesser evil than Nixon. A vote for Humphrey is a vote for Johnson's war and Daley's police state tactics.

How Preach Patience To A Draftee?

I confess that I do not know what to do politically at this juncture. The three main ways open are Allard Lowenstein's effort eventually to take over the Democrats, Marcus Raskin's attempt to form a New Party, and the New Left's call to go into the streets. To meet the crises of race and war which confront the country, time and patience, faith in persuasion, are required. But how preach these virtues to a youth who may be called up any day for the army? The war is destroying our country as we are destroying Vietnam. Hate and frenzy are poor substitutes for political thinking, yet the *enragés* among the youth, with their romanticism about guerrilla war, may set the tune for the whole country. A handful may provoke the government to such over-reaction as to polarize the country between extremes.

The New Left and even its moderate allies are still operating in a fog of misconceptions. The main one is that "the people" are against the war. The people on the contrary are confused and divided. To say that the streets "belong to the people" as Tom Hayden has done is to overlook those people who feel the streets belong to them, too, for the ordinary business of their lives. "Let that party," Raskin said of the Democrats the other day in calling for a New Party, "be the party of the cops, the military, the big city bosses and the non-people." There are an awful lot of "non-people." The need is for dialogue, not monologue, to win them over. If law and order really break down, if democratic processes are abandoned, it is we of the Left, the anti-war forces and the intellectuals who will be the first to suffer. To play with revolutionary talk and tactics as the New Left is doing, when there is no revolutionary situation, is to act as the provocateurs for an American Fascism.

The deeper tragedy lies in the increasing abandonment of non-violent tactics by black and white dissenters alike. To howl down those with whom we differ, to use obscenities instead of arguments, to abandon persuasion for direct action, to dehumanize the other side with cries of "pigs" and worse is to embark on a game the rightists are better equipped to play, and to set examples which American Storm Troopers may some day apply to us. Hate is still the main enemy of the human race, the fuel that heats the furnaces of genocide. How build a better world by relapsing into primitive and sanguinary habits?

The Same Con Man

"I want the killing in Vietnam to stop, but we cannot stop the killing if North Vietnam insists on sending another 150,000 new aggressors into the South to kill Americans and allies since Jan. 1 of this year."

—Johnson to the V.F.W. in Detroit August 19.

"We also estimate that in this year to date there have been in the neighborhood of 150,000 North Vietnamese come down into South Vietnam. So when you talk about the increased level that is definitely so. There has been an increase. Keep in mind, as I said once before though, that as far as we can ascertain in the main these are replacements, because their losses have been high, not only from killed in action, but wounded, illness, desertion, and other causes."

—Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford at a press conference in the Pentagon four days earlier Aug. 15.

The Money Value To The U.S. Of The Bombing Pause

Secretary Clifford: You will recall that the bombing restrictions went into effect on March 31. Since that time there has been a very substantial change in the rate of losses, both of planes and of crews. In the four months after the bombing restrictions went into effect, that would be April, May, June and July this year, we have lost 51 fighter and attack aircraft over Vietnam to hostile causes. During the same four months in 1967, we lost 126 planes. This indicates plane losses in that four month period are down 60 percent.

Q. This is over North Vietnam, sir?

Secretary Clifford: Over North Vietnam.

With reference to the loss of members of the plane crews, we have a similar type of heartening improvement. Last year, taking the same four month period, 124 crewmen were killed or missing. In the four month period this year, 63 were either killed or are missing.

—Press conference at the Pentagon August 15.

The Pentagon estimates the average cost of an attack or fighter plane at $2 million. So plane losses, according to the Secretary's own figures, cost $252 million in the four months since the bombing restriction, a saving of $150 million for the quarter or $600 million on an annual basis, though we are staging more raids and dropping more bombs than before. The latest official figure as given by Secretary Clifford May 28 to the House Appropriations Committee (p. 727 of the hearings on the 1969 second supplemental) was 5,000 sorties in March and about 10,000 at the time he testified. By concentrating the bombing on the more poorly defended Panhandle of North Vietnam and laying off the highly defended areas around Hanoi and Haiphong, air losses were cut sharply. They were running at about $1 billion a year. They are now running at about $400 million.

To these figures must be added the cost of pilots killed, lost or taken prisoner. The Pentagon estimates the cost of training a pilot at from $375,000 to $538,000, depending on the type of plane. If you take $450,000 as a rough average then the cost in pilots during the first four months of bombing restriction was reduced from $55,924,000 to $28,350,000, or on an annual basis $110,296,000. And pilots are not that easily replaceable.

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Renewed Cold War and Renewed Arms Race May Cost U.S.S.R. and U.S. Heavily

The Basic Factors Behind the Russian Take-Over of Czechoslovakia

It is difficult enough to find one's way back to freedom. It is even harder to find one's way to a freedom one never had. This is Russia's problem. I use the term Russia because this, the dominant country of the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc, is still the most backward of the nations it dominates, exhibiting even as under Czarism, an abyss between its sensitive elite on the one hand and the *mujik* on the other, still not fully emancipated from serfdom. The whole is still ruled, as under Czarism, by a system of secret police, censorship and forced labor for dissidents. This kind of rule is wholly unsuited to the Czechs, as the Westernmost Slavs, the most advanced. But if there is freedom in Prague, how can one go on denying it in East Berlin, in Warsaw, in Kiev and in Moscow itself? This is the question the Russians have answered by their brutal occupation of Czechoslovakia. Perhaps the Western Slavs cannot hope for freedom until it has been won in Russia itself.

Sharing Russian Poverty and Backwardness

The second disparity which lies behind the Czech occupation is the technological gap between the Germans and the Russians, now as ever rivals for the control of the lands between them. The Czechs are badly in need of capital goods after two decades of exploitation by the Russians and mismanagement by the Communists. Russian industry is not yet advanced enough to supply the machines. The Russian economy is not yet rich enough to provide the hard currency to obtain them elsewhere. The nearest and the easiest place to get the goods and the credits is in West Germany. The Russians fear more than anything else German influence penetrating the old *cordon sanitaire*. So the Czechs must share not only the political backwardness but the poverty of the Russians.

The consequences will be felt for a long time. In Hungary the Russians murdered Nagy, in Czechoslovakia they are already calling for the liquidation of 40,000 "counter-revolutionaries". Dubcek and the Czech Communists have been forced to become the prison wardens of their own people rather than see the heavier hand of the Russians or the hard-liners take over. A new terror is slowly settling down, and a new hatred of the Russians and the Communists will accompany it. The hopes of democracy under communism have been destroyed; the youth of the bloc will now begin to turn more openly against Communism as inevitably linked with the one-party State.

Internationally the consequences may prove as serious. One of the first signals of the cold came with the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia in 1948. Then Moscow feared the Marshall Plan, as it now fears investment from West Germany. The ease of the occupation has stirred natural fears in West Germany, as elsewhere in Europe. The result has given the Germans another excuse to balk at the nuclear non-proliferation pact. Renewed cold war and arms race are in prospect. The cost may prove far higher than acceptance of a freer regime in Czechoslovakia.

The strengthening of the hard-liners in Moscow will strengthen the hard-liners in Washington. That is bad news for us and them and the rest of the world.

Words For A Bitter Laugh in Latin America

"The fact that a small nation lives within the reach of a large nation does not mean that that large nation is entitled to move in on it to reorganize its internal affairs."

—Secretary Rusk at press conference, Aug. 22, speaking of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia.

As in Guatemala, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic? And as in Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela and the other Latin American countries in which our Special Forces and CIA are now operating.

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